



October Hay Situation and Price Update

By John McGregor, MFGA Extension Support

As we move into the beginning of October the forage harvest is drawing to a close throughout most of the province. Dry conditions this year has limited hay production with very few areas reporting a final cut will be taken after the Critical Harvest Period, which has just been completed. Long term averages show that we normally accumulate less than 50 GDD's between now and the end of November. Producers considering taking a final cut of their alfalfa shouldn't be too concerned with winter kill due to nutrient draw down because of re-growth after cutting. Stands that have been allowed to flower at least once during the growing season should have adequate root reserves. Some factors to consider before taking the final cut are age of stand (young stands are stronger), adequate snow trapping on the field to insulate the alfalfa crowns and the need for some good quality forage.

Although pasture growth has slowed, recent rains have helped improve regrowth in most areas. Cattle across the Province are starting to be moved off summer pastures and on to fall grazing or wintering sites.

Corn silage harvest continues with average yields being reported. Some areas are reporting smaller than expected cobs which may translate into lower than expected feed quality.

I surveyed the Manitoba Agriculture forage staff and some of the forage producers and industry personnel to get their impression of hay prices and the hay situation as of the end of September.

Hay Situation

The hay situation varies across the province. **Southwest** producers are looking at taking a final cut of alfalfa where possible. Haying of sloughs and marshlands continues, increasing hay supplies. Hay supplies are adequate but very little surplus. Demand is there from Saskatchewan. **Northwest** reports the annual cereal forage harvest continues but frost has some concerned about nitrates. Yields ranging from below average to just above depending on moisture conditions. The **Central** area reports that second cut hay is complete with yields below average. The wild hay harvest continues. There isn't expected to be a final cut of hay in this region. The area is also reporting a shortage of local straw. The **Eastern** area is reporting adequate to surplus

hay and straw supplies but there are reports of local shortages of straw and dairy quality alfalfa. Pastures and hay fields that have received hog manure are demonstrating good regrowth which some producers are grazing. The **Interlake** area reports that most haying is complete. Many fields do not have enough regrowth to warrant a final cut. Dairy hay yields are down slightly but quality is up with drier conditions for hay making. Some hay fields are receiving fertilizer.

Hay Prices

As we move into October we are seeing the effects that the dry conditions are having on the hay supply in Manitoba. The forage situation in Saskatchewan and North and South Dakota is taking some of Manitoba's hay but we continue to see the two markets: local and export and how they are starting to affect hay prices. With most of the harvest complete hay prices look to be moving higher than last year. Dairy quality alfalfa seems to be in high demand due to the dry conditions this past summer and the decrease of acres due to the high degree of winterkill this past winter. Straw, although supplies look to be adequate, reports of local shortages are common. The prices below are showing a fairly wide spread due to location to export markets and demand.

Alfalfa:	5-7 cents/lb
	Dairy Quality 8-10 cents/lb
Alfalfa/grass:	good quality 4-7 cents/lb
	Beef quality 3-4 cents/lb
Beef hay (grass):	2-3.5 cents/lb
Horse hay:	7 cents/lb
Straw:	1.2- 2.0 cents/lb

Local demand for beef hay looks to be limited but there are markets in Saskatchewan, North and South Dakota and Montana due to drought conditions. North Dakota has an emergency hay transportation program that will help reimburse a portion of the hay transportation to farmers and ranchers impacted by the drought. Presently, hay is moving west from Minnesota into the Dakotas.

[Kijiji Manitoba](#) has more listings for hay for sale this month as does the [Manitoba Hay Listing](#) site and the [Wisconsin Hay Report](#). You can go to [Kijiji](#) to access other provinces or the [Internet Hay Exchange](#) to access listing in the US and Canada. For those of you on social media [Facebook](#) has a Hay/Feed for Sale in Saskatchewan & Manitoba page that you may want to join.

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If you are interested in assisting the Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association in providing information for our monthly Hay Situation and Price Update, please contact John McGregor at john@mfga.net.